G-15 Summit

985. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the major decisions taken at the G-15 summit held at Jamaica from 10-12 February, 1999;

(b) what are the prospects for India's trad , particularly in sectors like software development and information technology in cooperation among developing countries; and

(c) what are the follow-up steps proposed to be taken in this regard by Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Ninth G-15 Summit held at Montego Bay, Jamaica from 10-12 February, 1999 deliberated extensively on issues of concern to developing countries. These included discussions on the current international economic situation, reaffirmation of the importance of a transparent, fair and equitable rules-based multilateral trading system under the WTO, reform of the international financial architecture, South-South and intra G-15 cooperation, and the prospects of undertaking a G-15—G-8 dialogue in these matters. All such priorities were duly reflected in the Joint communique issued at the end of the Ninth Summit. In order to be able t5 cope with the challenges posed by globalisation and economic liberalisation and the ongoing financial crisis, members agreed to promote convergence of view points on these issues. They also called for enhanced regional and international cooperation to combat the menace of terrorism.

(b) and (c) India considers that there is scope for cooperation with these countries in strategic sectors like software development and information technology. Currently, a Special Working Group on Electronics and Information Tecnnblogy exists between India and Egypt. More such specific sectoral Working Groups are proposed with Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea.

At a broader level, India believes that measures need to be implemented such as bilateral investment treaties, greater participation by the private sector and industry in South-South cooperation initiatives, as well as evolving common and coordinated positions on global multilateral trading issues under the World Trade Organisation to ensure greater market access for goods and services of developing countries in developed country markets. India also believes that mechanisms like the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) can be transformed into a potent instrument for development of trade between developing countries and that a future round of trade negotiations under the GSTP can lead to significant trade expansion between these countries. Government are sharing these perceptions from time to time at the G-15, G-77 and other such multilateral fora.

Effect of Sanctions Imposed by USA

986. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the net effect of sanctions imposed by USA against India for its nuclear tests;

(b) to what extent these sanctions have been nullified/neutralised; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) A precise quantification of the impact of, the restrictive economic measures imposed by the US against India is

difficult. Further, since a number of these restrictive measures have been relaxed by the US since their imposition in May 1998, their impact is yet to be finally evaluated.

(b) and (c) In July 1998, the US congress passed an amendment, called the Agriculture Export Relief Act of 1998 which exempted financial assistance for purchase of food, medicines and other agricultural commodities from the purview of the Glenn Amendment.

In November, 1998, under the Brownback Amendment passed by the US Congress, US Administration announced partial relaxation of the measures until October 21, 1999 relating to the programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA). The US Administration also restored lending by US Banks and resumed their International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET)

The general approach of the Government in countering the effect of these restrictive economic measures has been to try to get a better understanding of our position by the US. The US Administration stated that it had taken the above steps in recognition of the progress made in their dialogue with India.

No first use pact with Pakistan

987. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a recent press briefing Prime Minister had declared that the offer of a "no first use" pact on nuclear weapons would be repeated to Pakistan Government during the visit of Pakistan on February 20, 1999 in the inaugural direct Bus Service from Delhi to Lahore;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Pakistani Prime Minister;

(c) whether such an offer was made several times in the past with negative response; and

(d) if so, what was the need to repeat it?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) India's commitment to 'no-first-use' of nuclear weapons, announced subsequent to the May 1998 nuclear tests, is integral to our nuclear doctrine. We have also indicated our readiness to negotiate binding agreements on no-first-use, bilaterally or multilaterally, as government believes that support for such no-first-use agreements would not only reduce the risk of nuclear conflict, but also further the process of delegitimisation of nuclear weapons, an essential step for global nuclear disarmament. Earlier, India had offered to negotiate an agreement with Pakistan on no-first-use or nuclear capability. Various proposals on the nuclear question, made by both India and Pakistan, were discussed during PM's recent visit to Lahore. Pakistan has reservations to a no-first-use concept. However, both countries have agreed to take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, and to discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict.

Indian Prisoners in Pakistani Jails

988. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAMA:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indian civilian prisoners in Pakistani jails and the Pakistani civilian prisoners in Indian jails as on 31st December, 1998;

(b) whether repatriation talks have been held with Pakistan Government in this regard;